

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-18 are now present in this application. Claims 1 and 6 are independent. Claims 1, 4 and 6 have been amended, claim 3 has been canceled and claims 14-18 have been added by the present Amendment. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3, 4, 6-8, 12 and 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In light of this indication, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in dependent claim 3, and claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form. Note that Claim 1 has not been amended to include the subject matter also recited in intervening dependent claim 2. However, it is respectfully submitted amended independent claim 1 is still allowable without the feature recited in dependent claim 2, because the applied art does not teach or suggest the combination of elements recited in independent claim 1.

35 U.S.C. 102(b) Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 9-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yamane or Koto. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As set forth above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 3 (without the intervening claim 2). Accordingly, it is believed the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 9-11 has been overcome.

Claims 14-18

Claims 14-18 have been added to set forth the invention in a varying scope. In particular, claims 14-18 are similar to claims 9-13, but depend on new independent claim 6.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone David A. Bilodeau, Registration No. 42,325, at (703) 205-8072.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$1020 is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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